

**South Dakota National Guard**  
**Public Affairs Office**  
2823 West Main St.  
Rapid City, S.D. 57702

Phone 605-737-6721  
E-mail [PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil](mailto:PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## Guard continues support to state emergency management agencies in wake of fall blizzard

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The South Dakota National Guard continues to support state emergency management agencies this Veterans Day, Tuesday, Nov. 11, as South Dakotans recover from the fall blizzard that hit western South Dakota last week.

Since last Wednesday morning, more than 100 Soldiers and Airmen of the state's 4,200 available Guard members have supported emergency management agency operations. The Guard dispatched four snow blowers with crews on Friday, Nov. 7, to assist the South Dakota Department of Transportation's efforts in clearing Interstate 90, which opened later that evening.

Soldiers from the Rapid City based Task Force 109 continue to operate three of these snow blowers and one loader in Meade and Butte Counties.

Task Force 881, based in Sturgis, is currently supporting power restoration efforts in Harding County by blazing access trails with four D7 bulldozers. The dozer teams, along with recovery and maintenance crews, are assisting Grand Electric and Western Area Power Association restore services to residents.

Two D7 bulldozer teams with support crews from TF109 are supporting La Creek Electric's efforts to restore power to residents in Shannon County.

Last Friday evening, a National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and crew successfully conducted a medical evacuation of four civilians, three of which require dialysis, from Wanblee, S.D., to the Pine Ridge Hospital. In addition, one UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter and crew supported a reconnaissance mission with the governor and other emergency management officials to assess ground conditions over western South Dakota.

Army and Air National Guard leaders across the state continue to prepare Soldiers and Airmen to respond to five possible missions that the Guard may continue to receive from

the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management over the next few days. Guard officials are preparing to respond to search and rescue missions, snow removal support, power restoration support, power generator equipment requests, and aerial observation missions using National Guard rotary and fixed-wing aircraft.

National Guard support is based on the needs and requirements vetted through the Office of Emergency Management, which is the lead agency for all state emergency response.

The South Dakota National Guard has more than 4,200 Soldiers and Airmen available to respond to state emergencies, natural disasters and homeland defense.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 431-8753 or e-mail [orson.ward@us.army.mil](mailto:orson.ward@us.army.mil).